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RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7266
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 8542
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5931
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1267
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 3420
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY 9917
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 3302
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6564
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 0947
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2749
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 3692
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 1170
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2590
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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SIPDIS

AID/ANE FOR NMADHAV, RSTEELMAN
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SUBJECT: DISASTER DECLARATION -- CYCLONE YEMYIN

¶1. (U) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: This cable declares areas affected by Cyclone Yemyin in Sindh and Balochistan provinces as a disaster, and requests U.S. government emergency assistance for those in need. The powerful cyclone is traveling along southern Pakistani coastal areas, killing over 235 people and devastating communities with high winds and flooding, leaving 250,000 people homeless. The U.S. Government (USG) has been in contact with the Government of Pakistan, the UN, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to coordinate a response to this tragedy. Exercising her authority, Charge d'Affaires Anne Patterson is providing USD 50,000 to support emergency relief efforts in the affected areas. In consultation with the OFDA Regional Advisor, Charge requests an additional USD 226,000 from OFDA for a total of 276,000 in emergency assistance to be awarded to Mercy Corps. If needed, additional assistance will be requested of OFDA. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

Current Situation

¶2. (U) On Monday, June 25, 2007 Pakistani authorities evacuated thousands of people from the southern Pakistani coastal areas of Sindh and Balochistan as a powerful storm intensified into tropical Cyclone Yemyin. The storm began over the weekend with high winds and flash flooding, killing over 235 people in the port city of Karachi and approximately 20 others in southwestern Balochistan, where heavy intermittent rains are expected to continue. Along with the loss of life, there is severe damage to homes and infrastructure. An estimated 250,000 people are homeless and many are injured. In Balochistan several dams around Turbat have reached dangerous levels.

¶3. (U) Economic losses include: commercial activity in

Karachi brought to a halt; port activities severely disrupted; likely widespread damage to the Sindh cotton crop; loss to cash crops in the Sindh coastal region; anticipated widespread loss of livestock; infrastructure and livelihood losses to the fisheries industry. The most vulnerable people will likely suffer the most due to loss of habitat and livelihood and increased susceptibility to disease.

Government of Pakistan Response

¶4. (U) The Pakistani Army, Navy, and paramilitary forces have all been put on high alert. The Navy is monitoring Karachi's surrounding islands, and paramilitary forces have assisted with large-scale evacuations of residents from coastal regions to government schools further inland. People located in areas in close proximity to rivers and downstream from the Mirani Dam have also been evacuated. Traffic on the Coastal Highway linking Karachi with Gwadar has also been suspended. In addition, the Government has established cells to monitor the situation and make necessary arrangements in view of the cyclone.

¶5. (U) An official Pakistani government statement has noted that Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has ordered the immediate airlift of blankets, food, tents and medicine because several main highways have been badly damaged. Relief helicopters

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are ready but the weather is not permitting the delivery of supplies.

6.(U) Emergency has been declared in seven districts in Balochistan -- Kech, Gwadar, Jhal Magsi, Bolan, Naseer Abad, Jaffar Abad and Labsela. A Provincial Emergency Relief Cell has been established and district coordination officers of these districts have been designated as Emergency Relief Coordinators who will be in charge of all emergency operations in these districts.

¶7. (U) Balochistan's Chief Minister has allocated a sum of 100 million Rupees (approximately USD 1.67 million) to provide emergency relief to the affected people in these seven districts. This amount is in addition to 200 million Rupees (approximately USD 3.33 million) allocated by Prime Minister Aziz.

U.S. Government Response

¶8. (U) The Charge has determined that Cyclone Yemyin meets the necessary criteria for the USD 276,000 to be released: 1) a disaster exists in Pakistan; 2) the Government of Pakistan does not object to USG providing emergency assistance; and 3) such assistance is in the USG's interest.

¶9. (U) The State Department, the USAID/Pakistan Mission, and the Regional Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) are in coordination for an emergency response. USAID/Pakistan has also contacted the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and international NGOs. These NGOs include Catholic Relief Services in interior Sindh and Mercy Corps and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Sindh and Balochistan. Mercy Corps is assisting some communities along the Balochi coast and IFRC is providing food and non-food items for distribution by the Pakistan Army in Balochistan and Sindh.

¶10. (U) CHARGE'S NOTE: Under this declaration, I am requesting USD 50,000 to meet the immediate humanitarian assistance needs of the cyclone-affected areas in Balochistan and Sindh provinces. Furthermore, in consultation with the OFDA Regional Advisor, an additional USD 226,000 is requested from OFDA for a total of USD 276,000 to be awarded to Mercy

Corps for the provision of emergency relief supplies. END
CHARGE'S NOTE.

¶11. (U) The Department of State and USAID, in conjunction
with OFDA, continue to monitor the situation.

PATTERSON